

Ref. No: 2496  
Date: 07/04/26  
Subject: Cyber security breaches

## REQUEST

Under the Freedom of Information Act, I would like to request the following information for each calendar year from 2020 to 2026 inclusive:

1. The number of cyber security breaches that have being identified that were found to be a result of a malicious threat actor (i.e. not accidental data breach)
2. The breakdown in high-level causes of these breaches as identified by cyber security incident response teams (CSIRTs), for example (but not limited to) unpatched software/hardware, lack of multi-factor authentication (MFA), leaked user credentials, lack of in-transit encryption, etc
3. The number of breaches that occurred that were attributed to a previously known vulnerability to the organisations hardware, software, policies, or processes, for example where system was known to be at risk due to being unpatched or out of support, or security controls were recommended but not enforced, and was defined within the resulting incident response report.
4. The estimated combined costs incurred as a result of cyber security breaches defined in request number one in each year.

No specific details are requested in relation to software/hardware utilisation, but rather high-level causes of breaches

## RESPONSE

### **1. Number of cyber security breaches identified as malicious**

The Trust confirms that cyber security incidents are recorded, managed, and reported in line with national NHS requirements, including reporting to NHS England's national cyber security functions.

However, the Trust does not routinely classify incidents in a consistent or centrally reportable manner which definitively distinguishes between those attributable to malicious threat actors or other causes.

Therefore, this information is not held in the requested format in accordance with **Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000**.

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## **2. Breakdown of high-level causes of breaches**

The Trust does not hold the requested information in the specified categorised format.

Whilst root cause analysis is undertaken as part of cyber incident investigation and response processes, there is no centrally maintained dataset which classifies incidents into standardised categories such as “lack of multi-factor authentication”, “unpatched systems”, or similar across the requested period.

Therefore, this information is not held in accordance with **Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000**.

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## **3. Breaches attributed to known vulnerabilities**

The Trust confirms that it holds information relevant to this part of the request. However, this information is being withheld under **Section 31(1)(a) (Law Enforcement)** of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Disclosure of whether cyber incidents are attributable to known vulnerabilities within the Trust’s technology estate, policies, or processes would be likely to:

- Reveal specific areas of vulnerability within the Trust’s systems and controls
- Increase the likelihood of malicious actors exploiting known or perceived weaknesses
- Prejudice the Trust’s ability to prevent, detect, and respond to cyber security threats

In applying this exemption, the Trust has considered the public interest test. While there is a recognised public interest in transparency and accountability in relation to cyber security incidents, this is outweighed by the significant public interest in maintaining the security, integrity, and resilience of NHS systems, and in protecting sensitive data and critical services from harm.

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## **4. Estimated combined costs of cyber security breaches**

The Trust does not hold this information in a centrally recorded or reportable format.

Costs associated with cyber security incidents are not routinely aggregated or recorded as a single quantifiable value per incident or per financial or calendar year. Any associated costs

are typically embedded within wider operational, staffing, recovery, and remediation activities.

Accordingly, this information is not held in accordance with **Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000**.